

AaEA 2008: Get involved!

A Letter from Kai Young & Mark Rivera

Dear AaEA Members:

Thank you for your continued support of AaEA. Over the past year, your involvement has enabled us to provide an amazing number of professional development opportunities - and the organization has grown tremendously.

AaEA was established to enhance the professional life of evaluators in the Atlanta area and provide a forum for learning, and exchanging ideas and resources. To meet these goals, we welcome your involvement through our meetings, workshops, social and special events, and committee membership. There are numerous ways, large and small, to contribute and support AaEA as well as our evaluation community in Atlanta (see 'Ways to Get Involved' on page 2 for more information):

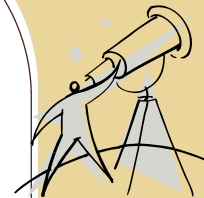
- If you like to chat, join the Communications Committee to keep AaEA members connected, promote learning and sharing resources by writing an article for the newsletter, and identify evaluation resources and tools to share with others.
- If you like meeting new people, consider joining the Membership Committee to help encourage new membership and orient new members to the organization.
- If you're finance savvy, our Finance Committee could use your help with making critical resource decisions over the course of the year.
- If you want to help promote evaluation and learning, join the New Evaluators and Training Committees and help organize AaEA's professional development workshops.
- If you are a social butterfly, we hope you consider becoming a part of the Networking Committee and organize events to build the evaluation network and promote casual learning.
- If you have a special area of interest, join one of our special interest groups (SIG) (e.g., International Evaluation, and Evaluation Capacity Building in the Non-profits) so you can meet others who share similar interests. And, if you have another area of interest, why don't you start a SIG?

We thank our members who contributed to planning and carrying out events over this past year and make AaEA possible. We sincerely encourage you to become involved in AaEA and hope that you will become a part of our *planning* family.

Again, thank you for your continued support of AaEA. Please visit our website (www.evalatl.org) to learn more about upcoming AaEA activities and how you can become involved!

Warm Regards,

Kai Young, 2007 AaEA President & Mark Rivera, 2007 President-elect



About the Newsletter...

The Newsletter is one way to help AaEA members: *Learn, Participate, Share, Network and Evaluate*

Each issue contains an article to help us:

- *Learn and Evaluate* by translating methodology into practice,
- *Participate* by featuring recent or upcoming AaEA events,
- *Share and Network* by putting a spotlight on one of our members.

CONTACT US!

Have a suggested topic for one or more of these areas?

Or is there something else you'd like to see in the newsletter?

Want to write an article yourself?

Communication Committee:

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Dana C Keener, Sr. Research Associate, Macro Int'l

Atlanta area Evaluation Association

Visit Us on the Web!!!
http://evalatl.org
email: info@evalatl.org

Learn, Participate, Share, Network and Evaluate.

Ways to Get Involved

Consider chairing a committee or joining a Special Interest Group (SIG). There is something for everyone! Descriptions of our committees and SIGs are provided below.

The **Training Committee** organizes quarterly presentations, training and educational sessions, and other special events. Main tasks include identifying good topics, presenters, formats and locations for events; promotion and marketing; and handling the logistics at each of the scheduled events.

The **Networking Committee** provides opportunities to support and nurture practicing evaluators and those interested in evaluation, bring new evaluators into the field, and enhance the professional practice of evaluation.

The **New Evaluators Committee** is for students and others new to the field of evaluation. The group organizes events to expose participants to assorted evaluation career paths, provide basic training in evaluation.

The **Membership Committee** promotes membership in AaEA and links members to opportunities for involvement in AaEA committees and leadership positions. Major tasks include targeted membership drives, creation of promotional literature, and managing the membership database.

The **Communications Committee** This committee is focused on internal and external communications among evaluators in the Atlanta area and beyond, including the website, listserv, marketing materials, and the newsletter you're reading right now!

The **Finance Committee** oversees the financial affairs and solvency of the association, as well as the structural issues for the AaEA such as by-laws, related to the legal/tax-exempt status of the organization. It develops the budget, monitors the financial position of the organization, and prepares the financial reports. This committee also helps with registration at the quarterly events, and identifies ideas to generate additional revenue for AaEA.

The **International Evaluation SIG** is for evaluators who are either currently working in the international arena or those who have interests in this field. This group provides a venue for the discussion of various issues related to the conduct of evaluation. These may include the use of established evaluation frameworks and their applicability in developing country contexts, evaluation frameworks, methodologies and perspectives used by different international organizations, the issues of culture that have relevance for measurement and evaluation, and other matters of interest in this area.

The **Community-Based Evaluation Capacity SIG** is for members who are interested in helping build the capacity of the non-profit and community based organization in Atlanta. Members strategize ways to promote evaluation practices and building evaluation capacity by partnering with local foundations.

REMINDER!

Renew your membership for 2008!

Benefits of membership include:

- **FREE or discounted admission** to presentations by local and national-evaluation experts
- **Discounts** to professional development events
- **Networking opportunities**

Atlanta area Evaluation Association

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**Featured Event:
Networking 2007**

**Join fellow Evaluators for
AaEA's final networking
event for 2007!**

This event will include:

- **Discussions** from people who presented at AaEA events this past year
- **A look back** on how AaEA has grown and changed over the past year
- **Conversations** on what the Networking Committee can offer you next year to best suit your needs and interests

When:

Tuesday, December 4th

4:30–6:00pm

Where:

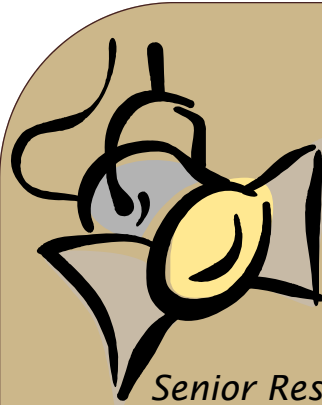
Manuel's Tavern (Eagles Nest room)

602 North Highland Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30307

For more information, visit
www.evalatl.org

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AaEA Member Spotlight

AaEA members come from diverse professional and educational backgrounds. We appreciate these differences and yet recognize similarities in our work. This section of the newsletter focuses on an AaEA member, their organization, and the evaluation functions they perform.

Dana C. Keener

Senior Research Associate, Macro International Inc.

What are your roles and responsibilities as an evaluator?

In the short time I have been at Macro International, I've started working on a rapid evaluation of a school-based asthma program and two health communication studies. As senior research associate, I will be involved in a wide range of evaluation activities such as developing and implementing evaluation plans; conducting literature reviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups; survey design and administration; and possibly manuscript development, proposal development, client engagement, and some management of evaluation and research projects. Before I accepted my current position, I worked as an independent evaluation consultant while finishing my doctorate in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina.

What are your evaluation interests?

I am interested in participatory approaches to evaluation, such as Empowerment Evaluation. I believe that the benefits of evaluation are maximized when communities and organizations are actively engaged in the evaluation process.

What evaluation challenges do you face in your job?

Prior to working at Macro, the greatest challenge I faced as an independent consultant was feeling professionally isolated at times. Although I really enjoy working with non-profits, I craved opportunities to work more closely with other evaluation

professionals who could teach me new skills and provide opportunities that I would not otherwise have working on my own. When I finished my doctorate in May, I decided to seek a full-time evaluation/ research position serving clients in an environment where I would be surrounded by other evaluators and social scientists. That is precisely what Macro has to offer, so I'm thrilled to be joining the team!

About Macro International:

Macro International is a research, evaluation, management consulting, and information technology firm supporting businesses and governments worldwide. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and abroad and over 1200 employees. For more information visit www.macrointernational.com.

One more thing about, Dana...

On Sundays, you can catch Dana at the Central Presbyterian Church, located in downtown Atlanta, where she is a member of the Geneva Handbell Choir. Monday through Saturday, you can catch her enjoying bluegrass music.

If you would like to be 'spotlighted' or want to shine the spotlight on someone else, please contact us!



Dana C. Keener